

Andrews University
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***THE PERSON AND WORK OF CHRIST AS REPRESENTATIVE RECTIFICATION: THE
SOTERIOLOGICAL AND THEODICAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE ROLES OF THE TWO
ADAMS EXAMINED IN THEOLOGICAL CANONICAL EXEGESIS OF ROMANS 5:12-21***

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Introduction

A theological system's conception of the results of the Fall is foundational for and integrally connected with all aspects of soteriology.¹ This has been generally acknowledged; but the nature of our first parents' role and the effects of their sin² have been much disputed.

This study will examine this issue in light of the centuries of debate about the subject, in order to more clearly ascertain the nature of the various soteriological implications that emerge. Theological exegesis of Romans 5:12-21 reveals significant doctrinal interconnectivity regarding the roles of our first parents and Christ as the Representatives of the human race—the core of the “Federal” View—with condemnation and death for all by birth in Adam and Eve, and justification and life for those receiving Christ's gift. This representative conception seems to account best for the scriptural materials in light of the exegetical and systematic analysis—without excluding the contributions of other views but demonstrating their incompleteness in isolation. Taken in the broader context of the canon, it provides a means by which the respective roles of our first parents and Christ can be seen to have theodical significance in light of the love and justice displayed by God's government in the context of and satanic and human rebellion.

This paper will consist of five main sections: (1) A brief history of interpretation regarding the role of Adam³ and the various views of original sin⁴ that have been held—primarily on the basis

1. In perhaps the most recent and nearest parallel to the present study, Michael Reeves and Hans Madueme, “Threads in a Seamless Garment: Original Sin in Systematic Theology” in Madueme and Reeves, *Adam, the Fall, and Original Sin: Theological, Biblical, and Scientific Perspectives*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2014), 210 write of the systematic theological connections in general and especially those founded upon original sin. “One of the truisms of systematic theology is that no doctrine can float freely or independently from others. . . . For doctrines do not sit in the Christian faith like marbles in a jar; they are more like threads in a garment. . . . When the doctrine of original sin is tampered with or lost, the doctrines of God and creation, humanity, sin, and salvation are all significantly affected.” According to Millard Erickson in *Christian Theology*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2013), 514, “The doctrine of sin . . . is important because it affects and is affected by many other areas of doctrine.” He then goes on to describe the connections with the doctrines of God, humanity, and salvation (he does not mention Christology). Stone and Duke, *How to Think Theologically*, (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2006), 89, suggest that “views of such central matters as sin, salvation, and how sinners are saved do not appear in splendid isolation in theology; they are inextricably related to each other.”

2. The term usually associated with this doctrine is “original sin.” While I will not avoid using this terminology (due to its venerable history) in either references or my own usage, it should be noted that its long association with the “realist” (see below) Augustinian view might involve the potential misunderstanding of its meaning being limited to that concept alone. The reader should understand that there are a number of various ways in which this term has been defined over the centuries as well as in ongoing debates in contemporary theology. As the paper proceeds, I will attempt to demonstrate that one of these views (the “Federal View”) is closest to the one being expounded here.

of the passage under review (Rom. 5:12-21), (2) A theological, canonical exegesis of the passage, (3) An evaluation of the various views, including an emphasis upon the positive contributions and potential limitations of each, while affirming the particular superior aspects of the Federal View, (4) An exposition of the soteriological and theodical implications of the findings in this research in light of the exegetical and theological preceding analysis, and (5) A summarizing conclusion in which the salient aspects of the research are reviewed and further recommendations for research are suggested.

History of Interpretation

As noted above, there has been considerable divergence among theologians and exegetes as to the meaning of Adam's sin, especially in regard to the most salient passage that deals with the role of Adam in Scripture—Romans 5:12-21.

Was Adam's role that of a poor example whose sin only directly affected himself and only us indirectly thereby (Pelagius),⁵ a natural head in which all human beings are guilty because they sinned with him "in his loins"—Realism (Augustine,⁶ Shedd,⁷ Erickson,⁸ etc.), a representative head whose guilt has been imputed to humanity—Federalism (Melancthon,⁹ Hodge,¹⁰ Wesley,¹¹ Lloyd-

3. Throughout this study, the reader should understand that references to Adam, his headship, and his sin are not intended to exclude the role of Eve, "the mother of all the living" (Gen. 3:20) who was given joint dominion over the planet (Gen. 1:26-28). The term "Adam" is used henceforth both because of concision as well as historical precedent. An expansion of this study (forthcoming) will deal with this issue in greater detail. This study also presupposes that the narrative in Genesis was historical (though not without poetic and stylized aspects) and that Adam and Eve were real persons, not symbolic or mythical figures. Again, this point will be further elaborated upon in later expansions of the present study.

4. See footnote 2.

5. Quoted in Augustine, *Answer to the Pelagians: A Treatise on the Grace of Christ, and on Original Sin*, trans. Roland J. Teske, in *The Works of St. Augustine*, ed. John E. Rotelle, (Hyde Park, NY: New City Press, 1997), Part 1, vol. 23: 440, 445 (2.13-14; 24).

6. Augustine, *A Treatise on the Merits and Forgiveness of Sins, and the Baptism of Infants*, in *The Works of St. Augustine*, Part 1, vol. 23: 129 (3.14).

7. W. J. G. Shedd, *Dogmatic Theology*, 3 vols., (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1891), 2:184.

8. Erickson, 580.

9. Philip Melancthon, *Commentary on Romans*, trans. Fred Kramer, (St. Louis, MO: Concordia Publishing, 1992), 132-139.

10. Charles Hodge, *Systematic Theology*, 3 vols.; (1871; repr., Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1940), 2:194-205.

11. John Wesley, "Justification by Faith" in *The Essential Works of John Wesley*, ed. Alice Russie, (Uhrichsville, OH: Barbour Publishing, 2011), 285.

Jones,¹² Murray,¹³ etc.), a head whose sin results in guilt because of our sinful nature—Mediate Imputation (Calvin,¹⁴ La Place,¹⁵ Mounce¹⁶)—or did he give us a sinful nature that carries no guilt until acted upon (New Haven School—Dwight, Taylor, Finney¹⁷), was he a natural ancestor whose descendants have passed on sin through their genes—Natural Heredity (Miley,¹⁸ Wiley,¹⁹ Grenz²⁰). Or is it that the whole race is now justified from birth—universal legal justification—(Cottrell),²¹ or is there inadequate information for parsing Adam’s role with such specificity,²² or is the whole question moot because the categories of guilt, punishment, and atonement in Scripture are unhelpful (Troeltsch)?²³

As one of the primary means to the end of answering this perennial question, the pericope of Romans 5:12-21 will be examined here with theological, canonical exegesis.

Theological and Canonical Exegesis of Romans 5:12-21

12. Martin Lloyd-Jones, *Romans: Chapter 5*, (London, England: Banner of Truth, 1971), 195-210.

13. John Murray, *The Epistle to the Romans*. 2 vols., (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1959), 1:205 and *The Imputation of Adam’s Sin*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1959), 32ff.

14. John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, (trans. Henry Beveridge; 1559; repr., Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1957), 217 (2.1.8); *Commentary on Romans*, trans. John Owen (Edinburgh: Calvin Translation Society, 1849), 112.

15. Hodge, op. cit.

16. Robert H. Mounce, *Romans*, The New American Commentary, ed. E. Ray Clendenen (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman, 1995), 142.

17. Charles Finney, *Lectures on Systematic Theology*, “Lecture XXIII: Moral Depravity,” (Whittier, CA: Colporter Kemp, 1946), 236-245.

18. John Miley, *Systematic Theology*, 2 vols., (New York: Hunt & Eaton, 1892), 1:508-509.

19. H. Horton Wiley, *Christian Theology*, 3 vols., (Kansas City, MO: Beacon Hill Press, 1953), 3:118-119.

20. Stanley Grenz, *Theology for the Community of God*. (Nashville, TN: Broadman and Holman, 1994), 266-267.

21. Jack Cottrell, *Romans*, The College Press NIV Commentary 1, (Joplin, MO: College Press Publishing, 1996), 333.

22. James Leo Garrett, *Systematic Theology: Biblical, Historical and Evangelical*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1990), 492-493.

23. Troeltsch, Ernst. *The Christian Faith*, (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Fortress Press, 1991), 246.

The methodological approach to the text utilized here is that of theological and canonical exegesis. “Theological exegesis is the presentation of the meaning of the biblical writings or of portions of those writings in the context of divine revelation.”²⁴ To seek the “meaning of the biblical writings” of course includes the usual loci of exegesis—historical setting, linguistics, grammar, syntax, archaeological findings, and the context of the wider thought of the writer, etc. But to place Scripture in the “context of divine revelation” refers to the necessity of being receptive to possible meanings of the text that go beyond all of the above factors, while at the same time taking into account all of their germane contributions. What is usually referred to as exegesis is the “foundation and scaffolding for the essential job”²⁵—that of seeking to ascertain what it is that God is revealing in the text. This is in itself a historically grounded exegetical approach, which is consonant with the explicit intent of the authors themselves, who rarely focus upon their messages as having to do with their own purposes,²⁶ but rather those of God, from whom their messages originate (1 Thess. 2:13; Jer. 1:4-10; Rev. 1:1; etc.). “To explain [Scripture] as a record of man's doings and ideas is to reject the basic conviction on which they rest. It is to interpret them in an atmosphere and with presuppositions which flatly contradict what they say. It is to neglect the reason they were written.”²⁷

Canonical exegesis, as it is to be understood for the purposes of this study, refers to viewing biblical data in terms of its connection to the wider canon of Scripture, which it informs and by which it is informed. “Two criteria of adequacy pertain to this canonical approach: correspondence

24. Floyd J. Filson, “Theological Exegesis,” *Journal of Bible and Religion* 16, (1948): 213.

25. Ibid.

26. There are also some instances of descriptions of writers who did not understand fully the messages that were being revealed to them (Dan. 8:15-16; 27; 12:8; 1 Pet. 1:10-12).

27. Filson, 213.

to the canon and internal coherence.”²⁸ Thus Romans 5:12-21 will be viewed in terms of not only its context in the book of Romans or the Pauline corpus, but also in the light of other relevant biblical data that impinges upon any of the issues addressed in the text.

As a result of taking into account the various theological threads of Scripture, a theological and canonical exegesis will serve as necessary means to the end of demonstrating the doctrinal interconnectivity in the main passage under review.

Structure and Place in the Epistle

Douglas Moo has noted the divergence of scholars regarding the place of chapter 5 in Paul’s structure of Romans: Is it part of what precedes or what follows? Moo notes that in some important ways it is both.²⁹ The preceding themes of justification as the solution for sin dealt with in chapters 1-4 as well as the theme of being “in Christ” as the condition for defeating death and sin of the following chapters 6-8 are an indication of the centrality of this pericope for the totality of Paul’s line of argument. Fitzmyer notes that “this paragraph constitutes the second most important passage in the letter, the first being 3:21-26.”³⁰ Martin Lloyd-Jones goes further: alluding to Anders Nygren as a precedent, he suggests that this passage is the central and most significant passage in the entire epistle, connecting all of Paul’s main emphases of “central and fundamental biblical doctrines.”³¹

The passage is structured as a chiastic *inclusio*. As such, the heart of the pericope consists of the stated contrasts between Adam and Christ and the result of their actions and respective roles.

12—Sin and death reign in Adam

28. John C. Peckham, “The Concept of Divine Love in the Context of the God-World Relationship,” PhD diss., Andrews University Theological Seminary, 2012), 11.

29. Douglas J. Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament, ed. Joel B. Green, (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1996), 315.

30. Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *Romans: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, The Anchor Bible 33 (New York: Doubleday, 1993), 411.

31. Lloyd-Jones, 1, 176, 183.

13-14—The Law
15-19—Parallels and Contrasts between Adam and Christ
20—The Law
21—Grace and righteousness reign through Christ

Romans 5:12

This verse has elicited much discussion over issues of the translation and possible resultant theologies stemming from the last clause. While space in this paper precludes dealing with all of the possible issues involved, it is important to engage with the meaning of this verse, as it is to some degree inextricably related to what follows in the pericope, and thus for understanding the doctrinal interconnectedness that arises from it. Here we will make two main observations: Paul appears to be making a direct causal connection between the sin of Adam and the universal reality of death, and that there is some kind of solidarity between Adam’s sin and sin of all human beings.

First, Paul indicates that sin and death came into the world because of “one man” (ἐνὸς ἀνθρώπου). This term is an exegetical key to the whole passage, and serves as the basis for its content—“one” or “one man” occurs no less than twelve times.³² The sin of Adam and the justifying work of Christ are the main points under discussion. What Paul seems to be indicating here is what he wrote in another passage (1 Cor. 15:22): “in Adam all die.” Death came into the world through “one man.” The narrative of the Fall in Genesis 3 contains curses pronounced to Adam and Eve. All of these curses—in regard to the ground, in regard to difficult labor and childbearing for women, and in regard to the death penalty of returning to dust are fixed aspects of human experience since that time. The curses were pronounced before there were any other human beings. All have received the effects of these curses because of what Adam and Eve did. “All the evils threatened against him in case of transgression, included them [Adam’s posterity], and have in fact come upon them. They are

³². Fitzmyer, 411.

mortal; they have to earn their bread by the sweat of their brows; they are subject to all the inconveniences and sufferings arising from the banishment of our first parents from paradise and from the curse pronounced for man's sake upon the earth.³³

Secondly, the chiasmic structure of the verse³⁴ shows a parallelism between the ἐνὸς ἀνθρώπου at the beginning and the πάντες ἥμαρτον at the end of the verse. A—One man sinned, B—death came through sin, B'—death came to all people, A'—all sinned. Since “by man came death,” through the sin of “one man,” “in Adam all die” (1 Cor. 15:21-22), and since the Genesis narrative indicates that this sentence was pronounced before the existence of any other human beings to (literally) participate in or ratify the sin of Adam, it follows that the sin of the last clause of the verse must be the same sin as that in the first clause. The sin of the one was (somehow—see theological analysis below) the sin of all. This should be instructive for the meaning of ἐφ' ᾧ, no matter which choice is made regarding its translation.³⁵

The lists given by exegetes for the meaning of this phrase can be placed under two basic categories: a relative clause or a causal/resultant conjunction.³⁶ Among the former are options such as “in whom,” “because of whom,” “because of which,” or “on the basis of which.” The essence of all of the latter are either “because” or “with the result that.” Virtually every translation and the majority of commentators surveyed adopt the second option.³⁷ One of the chief reasons usually given for this interpretation is the other Pauline usage of this construction in 2 Cor. 5:4, Phil. 3:10, and Phil. 4:10. An examination of these passages, however, is not determinative. In all three cases a pronominal relative clause would also, indeed, in some cases, perhaps more closely fit the context. In

33. Hodge, 197-198.

34. Also noted by Moo, 321.

35. For a number of the various options, see Leon Morris, *The Epistle to the Romans*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1988), 230; Mounce, 141-142; Fitzmyer, 414-416.

36. Fitzmyer, 413, 415.

37. Moo, 321.

the first two cases, the phrase could be translated “on the basis of which” and in the latter “for whom.” “Because” makes little sense in the context of 2 Cor. 5:4, but it could read as “with the result that.” “Because” would fit in Phil. 3:10, but any kind of conjunctive resultant meaning seems unlikely in Phil. 4:10. On the other hand, the pronominal relative clause view is perhaps supported by the consistent, indeed invariable LXX usage.³⁸ Thus it is that “in whom,” the famous translation of Augustine (and some others)³⁹ might seem to have some support on the basis of these precedents. Nevertheless, as has been noted by scholars, this view faces the challenge of having the antecedent “one man” seemingly too far removed from its consequent.⁴⁰ But a meaning such as “on the basis of which” or “under which circumstances” or “on the condition under which”⁴¹—referring to the clauses of the preceding, i.e. the sin of the one man and death’s spread through this sin, cannot be grammatically ruled out.

Since the grammatical considerations for ascertaining meaning here appear thus to be somewhat under-determinative, it is essential to examine both contextual and wider canonical considerations. While it has been argued on the basis of the use of the same aorist construction in Romans 3:23 (“all sinned”) that Paul is referring to personal, individual sins,⁴² both the verse and the context seem to militate against this interpretation. Paul does affirm the importance of individual sin, responsibility, and the need for repentance and faith throughout the letter; and indeed in this passage (verse 17) he alludes to the faith that receives the grace of Christ; but his primary focus in this pericope is upon the sin behind all other sins. Paul has already explained in the first three

38. Gen. 38:30; Josh 5:15; 2 Kings 19:10; Prov. 21:22; Isaiah 37:10, 62:8; Jer. 7:14 (as well as in the OT reiteration of the call of Moses in Acts 7:33). See Arland J. Hultgren, *Paul’s Letter to the Romans: A Commentary*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2011), 222.

39. Augustine, *Against Two Epistles of the Pelagians*, 7, in Philip Schaff, ed., *A Select Library of the Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church*, trans. Peter Holmes, (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1994), 5:419-420. See also Nigel Turner, *Grammatical Insights into the New Testament*, (Edinburgh: T and T Clark, 1965), 116-118.

40. See e.g. Fitzmyer, 414.

41. Frederick W. Danker, Walter Bauer, William F. Arndt, and F. Wilbur Gingrich, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1957), “ἐπὶ,” 285-289.

42. Pier Franco Beatrice, *The Transmission of Sin: Augustine and the Pre-Augustinian Sources*, trans. Adam Kamesar, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 116, 118.

clauses why all people die—because of the sin of the “one man.” Moreover, he has specifically denoted the reason for which death spread to all people by the use of the adverb οὕτως—“thus.” The sin of one man leads to death for all people. It would be an unlikely argument to then proceed to give a different reason for why all people die and why sin is in the world—namely that each individual’s sin causes death. Some have argued that it is both in some sense—i.e. that Adam’s sin causes the death of everyone, as well as each individual’s sin causing their own death.⁴³ However, as I will argue more thoroughly below, the connection between Adam’s sin and ours is better thought of as being basis and consequence rather than viewing death and sin as a result of the conflation of the two; just as our standing before God is based on Christ’s imputed righteousness, not our own, yet sanctification follows as a concomitant result.

We cannot suppose that the apostle is dealing with two different facts when in verse 12 the death of all is grounded upon the sin of all and when in subsequent verses the death of all is grounded upon the one sin of the one man. The whole passage is a unit. The central strand is the analogy that exists between the passing of condemnation and death to all by the sin of the one and the passing of justification and life to the justified by the righteousness of Christ.⁴⁴

There must be some sense in which the last clause is integrally connected with the first—the sin of the “one man.” Thus the sin of the one must also be the sin of all—at the same time, at the same event, a view which might have some support from the fact that all three of the verbs in this verse are in the aorist.⁴⁵ The example of which in question is what is referred to as “punctiliar” aorist—denoting a past completed action.⁴⁶ As the following context indicates, the sin referred to is the transgression of “one man.” Again, this interpretation is in consonance with Paul’s statement in 1 Cor. 15:22—“in Adam all die.” In addition, the whole passage revolves around the universal results of

43. James D. G. Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1998), 95. This could be consonant with the “mediate imputation” view discussed below in the “Theological Analysis” section—that it is the sin of each individual is thought of as their depraved nature. However, this does not appear to be Dunn’s view, which is closer to that of Pelagius, Miley, and Wiley. There is no guilt without personal volition (97). This seems to be in tension not only with this passage, but also OT precedents which included guilt and sacrifices for unintentional sins (Lev. 4-6) as well as the concept of continual need for atonement in all circumstances (Lev. 6:13; Ex. 28:38-40).

44. Murray, 185.

45. See Morris, 231.

46. A.T. Robertson, *A Grammar of the Greek New Testament in the Light of Historical Research*, (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1919), 833; Daniel B. Wallace, *Greek Grammar: Beyond the Basics*, (Grand Rapids, MI, Zondervan, 1996), 557-558.

Adam's sin, not each individual's sin. From verses 15 through 19 it is averred that "one man" brought death, condemnation, and constituted all as sinners.⁴⁷ The translation "because" would then imply that death spread to all people "because" the sin of Adam was (somehow) the sin of all. The translation "on the basis of which" or "under which conditions" would imply that the basis of which all sinned was that Adam's sin brought sin and death into the world and every person has received the results of his action—and indeed they are represented as metaphorically participating in it. In this case, the relative clause would be an example of a "conceptual antecedent"⁴⁸—one that refers back to previous events, arguments, or concepts. "All sinned" on the basis of Adam's sin. The translation "in whom" (if permissible) would even more directly support the view suggested here, though it is not necessary in order for it to be validated.

There is also further evidence that supports a solidarity interpretation, both from Old Testament precedents as well as other Pauline usages. Throughout the Hebrew Bible, the word אָדָם is used to refer not only to the first human being, but to all humanity. And in Paul's writings, metaphorical corporate solidarity participation language is used in regard to Christ and believers in a way that comports with the roles of Adam and Christ in this pericope.⁴⁹ In the subsequent passage, Rom. 6:1-8, Paul uses the prefix σὺν (together with) to denote metaphorical corporate participation in the life, death, burial, resurrection, and ascension of Christ (c.f. Eph. 2:6; Col. 2:12, 3:1). In addition, there are the many passages which involve the ἐν Χριστῷ motif. These involve both objective and subjective aspects⁵⁰ which in essence cannot be separated but must be distinguished. It is to be noted that this motif is primarily used in regard to justification—(e.g. Rom. 3:24; 8:1; Gal. 2:17, 3:14; 2 Cor. 5:21), but that the subjective aspects are an outflowing of the same reality—being

47. Murray, 183-184.

48. Wallace, 333-334. Wallace identifies the pronoun of the last clause of Rom. 5:12 as an example of a conceptual antecedent.

49. See Lloyd-Jones, 211-212.

50. Dunn, 397-398.

united with Christ. In 1 Cor. 1:30 Paul writes that being “in Christ” is the basis for wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption. In this regard, it could be argued that the end of chapter 6 is an echo of the emphasis of this passage—the contrast of the results of Adam’s and Christ’s actions: “For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Rom 6:23). Death in Adam—life in Christ: just as in 1 Cor. 15:22 and 2 Cor. 5:14—“one died for all, therefore all died.” All died in Adam, and Christ therefore died for all. This corporate solidarity interpretation will be further bolstered by an analysis of what follows in the remainder of the pericope as well as in the subsequent theological examination.

Romans 5:13-14

Paul now turns his attention to the question of the Law—a consistent theme in all of his writings. This is at least partially because of the concerns of the Jews in his audience who may have associated sin solely with breaking the Law of Moses. But Paul has already argued that there is a moral law that pre-dates and transcends the Law of Moses—the law revealed in nature and conscience that is alluded to in chapters 1 and 2. It is evident from the narratives in Genesis that people at that time knew, by some direct means (undisclosed in the text), the basic moral principles of God’s laws as later revealed explicitly in the Ten Commandments.⁵¹ In addition, Paul argues in 4:15 that where there is no law there is no transgression. Thus I concur with those who argue that Paul’s meaning here cannot be that sin was uncounted and unpunished from the time between Adam and Moses (it was for example at the Flood),⁵² over against those who argue that the pre-Law sin was “guiltless” or “not charged to our account as sin because there was no law to define it,”⁵³ or that

51. For the first and second commandments see Gen. 35:1-4; the fourth, Gen. 2:1-3; the fifth, Gen. 18:29; the sixth, Gen. 4:8-11; the seventh, Gen. 39:7-9; 19:1-10; the eighth, Gen. 44:8; the ninth, Gen. 12:11-20; 20:1-10; and the tenth, Genesis 27). See *Seventh-day Adventists Believe ... A Biblical Exposition of 27 Fundamental Doctrines*, (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 1988), 247. See also Ambrosiaster *Commentary on Paul’s Epistles in Romans Interpreted by Early Christian Commentators*, J. Patout Burns, trans. and ed., (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2012), 113.

52. Murray, 188-190; Morris, 233.

53. Dunn, 97; Mounce, 142.

people from this time “lived before God gave specific commandments to the people and they could not then, sin, as Adam did, by transgressing.”⁵⁴ What then is meant by these verses? Paul seems to be saying that though there were sin, law, and death in the world before the particular Law of Moses, the transgressions committed were not as significant as Adam’s sin—his sin affected all of humanity. “Their sin did not have the same typological and fundamental role as Adam’s sin, for Adam’s sin was of such a nature that sin and death encompassed the whole world because of his transgression of God’s revealed command.”⁵⁵ “Paul is not concerned with downgrading the law. Rather, his concern is the uniqueness of the two Adams.”⁵⁶ Paul is actually arguing that there was indeed a law before Moses, and that sin could be imputed or counted before that time. However, these sins were not in the same category as that of Adam, the representative “type” of Christ. The reign of death was due to Adam’s sin, not those of other human beings. The transgression of the Law of Moses was not the cause of sin and death. These were already in the world before Moses—they entered through Adam, resulting in the reign of both over all. Adam is the type of Christ, the One who (as will be shown in what follows) rectifies everything that Adam has caused—sin, death, and condemnation. Only two beings in the history of the world have been representatives of the whole human race, each with effects that reverberate directly for every human being—Adam and Christ. “There have only been two heads to the human race. . . . Every one of us is either ‘in Adam’ or else ‘in Christ.’”⁵⁷

Romans 5:15-19

In verse 15, Paul begins a series of comparisons and contrasts between the actions of Adam and those of Christ. In the local context of this section, it is here that Christ emerges as the Rectifier

54. Moo, 333.

55. Thomas Schreiner, “Original Guilt and Original Death” in *Adam, the Fall, and Original Sin* (Madueme and Reeves), 281.

56. Rousas John Rushdoony, *Romans and Galatians*, (Vallecito, CA: Ross House Books, 1997), 77.

57. Lloyd-Jones, 180.

of the catastrophe of sin and death that Adam has caused and which adheres to all human beings apart from Christ's work.

First there is the contrast: the free gift (χάρισμα) is not like the trespass (παράπτωμα). The latter term is used in the succeeding verses to refer to the sin of Adam as well as in reference to those of other human beings. However, as was noted above, Paul does not equate the significance of Adam's sin to those of other human beings. He has already stated that their sins were not like Adam's. Moreover, in this present verse, Adam's sin is again referred to as the one through which "the many" died. ("Many" seems to be used here as a rhetorical foil to "the one," as opposed to denoting any kind of limitation of the results of the actions of either Adam or Christ—though that of the latter is implied, as will be seen below, in verse 17). It is not their own sin which causes their death, but rather that of Adam (here denoted "the one"—τοῦ ἑνός). Again, the verb (ἀπέθανον) is in the aorist, which may serve to confirm the exegesis of verse 12 above, i.e. that all were sentenced to death on the basis of the sin of Adam. Another aspect of the contrast is the term πολλῷ μᾶλλον (much more). The work of Christ in His gift of grace is more abundant and significant than the results of the one sin of Adam.

The comparison is based on the similarity of the representative nature of the respective actions of the "the one" Adam and the "one" Jesus Christ. Analogously (and quite significantly, in terms of implications to be explored further below), it is not the works of "the many" that earn their right to receive the results of Christ's work, but rather it is an abundance of the gift of grace (δωρεὰ ἐν χάριτι) which is εἰς ("upon" or "into") those who receive it (verse 17). This was the same preposition that was used for the righteousness of God appropriated by faith in 3:22. Paul uses words related to χάρις (grace) and δωρεὰ (gift) to describe Christ's rectifying work in both this and the following verses. Based on the preceding, we should probably conclude that "the many" of verses 15 and 19 are equal to "all men" in verse 18—that is that it is only those who by "receiving" the gift (v.

17) and are born again “in Christ” that are benefited by Christ’s work. “We are to understand ‘the many’ in terms of all who are in Adam (everyone who is born into the human family) and all who are in Christ (everyone who has been born into the family of God by faith in Christ).”⁵⁸

Verse 16 begins with another statement of the contrast between the transgression (ἁμαρτήσαντος) and the gift (δῶρημα). In this case there are two contrasts referred to:

First, there is again a contrast between the one and the many. One question that emerges in regard to this contrast is whether it is the one sin of Adam⁵⁹ that is being mentioned or whether it is again (as in verses 15, 17, and—as I will argue—18, and 19) a reference to the “one man” Adam. If there is a smooth reading with a consistent meaning of “ἐνὸς” throughout the passage, it would seem best to adopt that in translation. On the other hand, consistency is not sufficient alone as a reason for adopting this reading. Almost all of the translations surveyed render ἐνὸς as “one trespass” or “one sin” in this verse. However, the Greek text does not have any reference to “sin” or “trespass.” It simply reads, “one.”⁶⁰ The insertion and interpretation is done on the basis of the following contrast, which is explicit in the Greek—“πολλῶν παραπτωμάτων”—the many trespasses. The reasoning is that the one sin of Adam should be contrasted with the many sins of his posterity. While a decision is difficult here, I would suggest that the passage lends itself to greater coherence and theological consistency by maintaining the same parallel throughout the verses 15-19: the one Adam and the one Christ. This interpretation is strengthened by the fact that the opening of the verse contrasts the gift with “the sinning one”—Adam, not his one sin per se. But the nature of this verse may lend itself to recognizing both interpretations (more so than the other verses to some extent) because it is both the one sin of the one man as well as the many transgressions of the many people which are being

58. Mounce, 145.

59. Moo, 338; Murray, *The Imputation of Adam’s Sin*, 67. Moo argues for ἐνὸς to be rendered as “one trespass” here but as “one man” (Adam) in verse 18.

60. The KJV, YLT, ASV, and Webster read literally here and interpret ἐνὸς as the one man Adam. All other major translations surveyed render it as “one trespass” or “one sin” and supply the word accordingly.

contrasted here. The free gift of Christ not only rectifies the trespass of Adam, but also all the other trespasses of those who receive Him.

The other contrast here is between judgment (κρίμα) and condemnation (κατάκριμα) and the gift (δῶρημα) and justification (δικαίωμα). Of particular importance for the exegesis here is the translation of this latter word. In the LXX, it is used often to translate the Hebrew word דָּן—“judgement deciding a case,” “process of litigation before judges,” “sentence of judgment,” “execution of judgment,” “custom, manner.”⁶¹ Some lexicons include additional meanings for δικαίωμα based on intertestamental and NT passages such as “requirement” or “righteous act.”⁶² Others, based on first century contemporary usage, refer to the meaning of “arguments.”⁶³ As all the translations and commentators surveyed agree, the context of the contrast with the judgement to condemnation leads logically to a meaning of “justification” here.⁶⁴ Not all agree, however, that this word should be translated in the same way in verse 18, as will be examined below.

The third series of contrasts between the results of the actions of the “one” Adam and the “one” Christ consists of that between offense and death on the one hand and grace, the gift of righteousness, and life on the other. The reign of death inaugurated by the “one”—Adam—referenced here alludes back to verse 12 and the one man-sin-death pattern there. Again the exegesis of verse 12 appears to be confirmed by the emphasis on the fact that death came as a result of Adam’s sin, not that of anyone else. The “gift of righteousness” appears to refer again to justification. Paul has elaborated on the forensic nature of justification in 3:21-31 and 4 in such a way as to conceptualize it as a gift received by faith, the latter being the key term in those passages. This faith

61. Francis Brown, S. R. Driver, and Charles A. Briggs, *A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1907), “דָּן,” 1048-1049. See also Barbara Friberg, Timothy Friberg, Neva F. Miller, *Analytical Lexicon of the New Testament*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2000), “δικαίωμα” for similar NT usage.

62. Joseph Henry Thayer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, (Boston, H.L. Hastings, 1896), “δικαίωμα,” 151; F. Wilbur Gingrich, *Shorter Lexicon of the Greek New Testament*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983), “δικαίωμα,” 50.

63. J. H. Moulton and G. Milligan, (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1930), “δικαίωμα,” 163.

64. E.g. Mounce, 144.

is alluded to by the term λαμβάνοντες “the receiving ones.” This—aside from the metaphorical corporate solidarity of verse 12—is the only verb associated with any other human beings other than Adam or Christ in the pericope. This is important for two reasons: Firstly, it underscores the theme of representative headship throughout—that the only thing fallen human beings can do in light of the effect of Adam’s sin is to receive the gift of justification from a new Representative. Secondly, it serves to qualify and clarify the reference to “all men” in the following verse. Though the free gift of justification is available to all, only “the receiving ones” obtain its benefits.

Verses 18 and 19, the fourth and fifth series of comparison and contrasts, summarize Paul’s thought in the pericope: All are condemned because of what Adam did; justification is appropriated by those who believe because of what Christ has done. As noted above, the Universalist⁶⁵ interpretation is unlikely due to Paul’s consistent teaching elsewhere (3-5; Galatians, Ephesians 2, etc.) that justification comes by personal faith,⁶⁶ not simply by being born after the time of Jesus. This is also supported by the fact that he uses the word λαμβάνοντες—those who receive the gift—to refer to those that are justified. Just as is the case in one of the parallel passages previously alluded to, 1 Cor. 15:22, the “all” of those affected by Christ is qualified.⁶⁷ In that passage it is in the following verse, “those that are Christ’s” (v. 23). Here it is in the preceding verse (“those that receive).” Paul does not deny elsewhere that the sacrifice of Christ affected the whole human race in the sense of universal atonement and offer of reconciliation. The same relationship between offer and reception is found in 2 Cor. 5:14-21, where Paul writes that Christ “died for all” and that God was “in Christ, reconciling the world to Himself.” Yet even here, Paul’s readers are exhorted to “be reconciled to God,” and that the benefits of Christ’s work are for those who are “in” Him (v. 17), the reality of

65. As well as “universal legal justification” discussed below in the theology section.

66. See theodicy discussion below for the probable exception in the case of infants.

67. Murray, 203.

which is contingent, not guaranteed to all by the cross—this contingency being evident from the use of the εἰ (if) clause.

There is difficulty in translating this verse in two further aspects. Firstly, ἐνὸς (“one”) could refer either to the one transgression of Adam or the one man. So also it is the case with Christ. The passage could be referring to the one Man Christ or His one act. It has been argued that there is significance to ἐνὸς lacking the article, and that when it does it refers to the transgression of Adam.⁶⁸ However, this is inconsistent with verses 12 and 16 where the article is lacking and the references are reasonably to the “one man” Adam. Translators and commentators are divided here; but as previously noted, the passage lends itself to a more coherent reading if the consistency of contrast is maintained—Adam and Christ.⁶⁹

Secondly, again a decision regarding the word δικαιώματος is difficult. Some translate it as “one righteous act.” It is alleged by some that the justification verdict could not be “of Christ” as is implied by the genitive here.⁷⁰ That is, it is only “God” who can justify, not Christ. It is difficult to see how such a strong bifurcation in the Trinity is warranted. As noted above, the primary LXX meaning for this word is “judgments”—verdicts or decrees of God, either in the sense of judgments to be rendered in punishment or acquittal (e.g. Ex. 21:1 ff.) or in lists of all of the aspects of the Torah to be kept (e.g. Ezek. 20). In the NT, the word usually refers to the requirements of the Law (Luke 1:6; Heb. 9:10; Rom. 2:26; Rom. 8:4). However, in Rom. 1:32 and Rev. 15:4, the context warrants a translation of “righteous judgments.”⁷¹ Rom. 1:32 refers to those who know that “those who practice such things deserve to die.” This is a righteous sentence or judgement. In Rev. 15:4, the reference to God’s “righteous judgement” directly precedes the pouring out of the seven last plagues. In Rev. 19:8,

68. Murray, 201. Murray admits this inconsistency.

69. Moo, 341; Morris, 239, suggests that we cannot be certain either way whether “one man” or “one trespass” is intended.

70. Ibid., Murray, 200.

71. So KJV, NKJV, RSV, WEB in Rev. 15:4.

based on the forensic nature of the white robe imagery in Rev. 7:14, i.e. the robes become white by being washed in the blood of the Lamb, δικαιώματα should there be translated “justification” just as was done here in verse 16. Also, with the exception of Bar. 2:17 there does not appear to be any of the LXX or intertestamental usages that warrant a translation of “righteous act.” “Clearly the word has to do with declarations of various kinds, and it is in question whether it should be taken to signify a deed in the three passages listed (Rom. 1:32; Rev. 15:4; 19:8).”⁷² Given Paul’s consistent forensic usage of the δικαιώ word group in Romans, it is reasonable to conclude that his meaning here is that of “righteous verdict”—a verdict that leads to “justification of life.” This may be an echo of the language of 3:25 where God is δίκαιον καὶ δικαιοῦντα—“just and the justifier.” The translation offered here is not a redundancy,⁷³ but an elaboration. “Sentence of justification’ suits the context admirably, while the word has the meaning ‘righteous act’ rarely if at all.”⁷⁴ Δικαίωμα may also have the connotation of a verdict that is just.”⁷⁵ We could thus translate, “Through the righteous verdict of one there is to all men the justification that brings life.”⁷⁶

With verse 19, we arrive at the summation of this section of the pericope, in which the contrasts between Adam and Christ are again, for the sixth time, conveyed with various unique nuances, as has been previously the case. This time it is the παρακοῆς (“disobedience”) of the “one”—Adam—that is contrasted with the ὑπακοῆς “obedience” of the “one”—Christ.⁷⁷ It appears that this contrast involves a double “imputation.” The disobedience of Adam is imputed to the whole human race, and the righteous obedience of Christ is imputed to those who believe. The former will receive

72. Morris, 239, n.

73. Contra Murray, 201.

74. Morris, 239.

75. Fitzmyer, 420.

76. Viewed as a “genitive of result,” Moo 341, n., or “genitive of destination;” see Wallace, 100-101.

77. See the discussion above for why “one” probably refers to Adam and Christ here, rather than “one act” of disobedience or “one act” of obedience. Most of the translations surveyed render the term according to “one man” rather than “one act,” and this is the view taken here on the basis of consistency as well as other theological concerns of the text.

more detailed analysis in the following theological section; but some of the basis for the latter shall be examined here, as well as in more detail later.

Paul refers to “the righteousness of God” being “upon all” of those who believe in 3:22, and the same “righteousness of God” is said to be appropriated “in Him”—Christ—in 2 Cor. 5:21. There is in that verse another double imputation—Christ was made sin, and we are made God’s righteousness “in Him”—that is, the righteousness of Christ is credited to our account. Paul writes earlier in chapter 5 that we are “saved by His life” (v. 10).

This interpretation is supported by the OT precedent of substitution. It was not only that the sins of the repentant were placed on the animal in sacrifice, but also that the animal itself was to be “without blemish” (Lev. 1-6; Num. 29; etc.). The filthy garments of Joshua were not only removed, but clean garments were put on him (Zech. 3; cf. Isa. 61:10). God is called “the Lord our righteousness” (Jer. 23:6), and the exchange of the sinless purity of Suffering Servant in Isaiah 53 is the basis for His bearing of the iniquities of the people as well as justifying them. While some view the passage as referring to Christ’s act of obedience in His death (Phil. 2:8),⁷⁸ it more likely refers to all aspects of the sinlessly perfect life of Christ lived on our behalf, inclusive of the cross. “Undoubtedly it was in the cross of Christ and the shedding of His blood that this obedience came to its climactic expression, but obedience comprehends the totality of the Father’s will as fulfilled by Christ.”⁷⁹ The cross was “the crowning act of Christ’s lifelong obedience.”⁸⁰

The words in this verse based on the verb καθίστημι are usually rendered as “made.”⁸¹ However, the LXX usage is consistently that of “appoint” or “set.”⁸² The NT usage is similar but also

78. Moo, 344; Murray, 204.

79. Murray, 205. This appears to be a somewhat puzzling view in light of Morris’ consistent insistence that the only valid translation for ἐνὸς that of “one act” rather than “one man.” He seems to be conceding that more than one act is involved in the obedience of Christ.

80. F. F. Bruce, *The Letter of Paul to the Romans*, Tyndale New Testament Commentary Series, ed. Leon Morris, (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1985), 125.

81. YLT renders it “constituted.”

includes cases of being conducted or led (Acts 17:5).⁸³ Again it appears that Paul's primary meaning must be forensic here. It would be a very unlikely and odd climactic summary to a passage concerned with the status of human beings in Adam and in Christ—all human beings condemned by imputation of Adam's sin, and those who receive the gracious gift justified by the imputation of Christ's righteousness respectively—to shift to a concern of moral intrinsic quality or character transformation. This occurs more fully in chapters 6 and 8. The reality of the forensic categories supersedes, in both priority and importance, the significance of their resultant ethical corollaries. This is because the latter are impossible without the former. The basis of love and ethical transformation is the reality of the embracing reconciliation of God's love as displayed in the propitiation (1 John 4; Eph. 4:32).

Verse 20: The Law

Paul again returns to the question of the Law. Here he simply states what he does elsewhere in the epistle as well as in Galatians: the knowledge of God's Law entails a knowledge of sin, and thus a recognition of the necessity of grace (Rom. 3:19-20; 4:15; 7:7, 13). The Law could not solve the sin problem, but it could reveal the ubiquity of the corruption of humanity and its need for a Savior.

Verse 21: Summary

The final verse of the pericope alludes to seven key words of the preceding: sin, death, reign, grace, righteousness, life, Jesus Christ. As the focus was upon Adam and his causing of sin and death to reign at the outset of the section in verse 12, so here Paul ends with a focus upon the Representative Rectifier, Jesus Christ, who has caused grace to reign through His righteousness.

This theological canonical exegesis has been an attempt to come to terms with the meaning of key Greek terms, the local and wider contexts of the passage in Romans, as well as germane

82. E.g. Gen. 39:4; Deut. 1:13; 2 Sam. 6:21; 2 Chron. 36:4.

83. Freiberg lists James 4:4 as an example of "make" (see also Fitzmyer, 421), but this is again more smoothly and accurately translated as "set."

theological considerations that were taken into account for the purpose of interpretation. The meaning of this passage and its relevance for the doctrine of original sin will now be examined in light of the various views that have been held through the centuries.

Evaluation of Views

Space precludes dealing with all of the theories in detail,⁸⁴ but here there can at least be an evaluation of the strengths and weaknesses of each as they relate to the exegesis above and as a means of moving toward an analysis of the doctrinal interconnectivity elucidated therein.

Pelagianism

The weakness with Pelagius' view—that Adam's role is that of a poor example—is that it serves to make the connection between Adam and all other human beings to be so tenuous as to be virtually meaningless. Paul would not need to have mentioned Adam as a poor example, but he could have mentioned any other sinner. According to Pelagius—contra Paul—death, sin, and condemnation come from each individual sinner, and are thus not in any way directly related to Adam. Rather than viewing sin as the reigning all-pervasive power described by Paul, the Pelagian view involves sin as simply a matter of the individual will—it is merely a choice. It also carries with it an optimistic anthropology, and neglects to come to terms with the doomed nature of human beings from the start of their corporate and individual histories (Rom. 5:12-21; 1 Cor. 15:20-23; Eph. 2:3; Ps. 51:5; Gen. 8:21; etc.). Most importantly, as a result of this simple view of sin and humanity, the connectivity with the doctrine of imputed righteousness and justification by faith is removed. Salvation in a Pelagian sense involves following a good example rather than being rescued by a new

84. For example, the case of Arminius is a difficult one, and as such would require more space than is available here. As Keith Stanglin and Thomas McCall in *Jacob Arminius, Theologian of Grace* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012) write, "The modern reader who compares all the relevant passages in Arminius's writings must acknowledge a degree of ambiguity. Arminius's specialized vocabulary in this context can be confusing" (149). Thus Arminius's view is not treated here (though it will be in a later expansion of this study). Also, the views of those such as Troeltsch, who denies the importance of Paul's thought altogether, or those of Garrett (see page 3 above) who asserts that there is insufficient data in the text to determine the plausibility of any of the various views, will not be considered here. In light of the purpose of the paper and its findings, I cannot conclude either that the biblical materials do not provide important, discernable theological messages regarding original sin, or that the whole line of Paul's thought is not worth considering.

*Representative who takes our place in His life and death—suffering our death and giving us His life.*⁸⁵

On the other hand, as his opponent Augustine admitted, Pelagius was not entirely wrong to mention Adam as a bad example, or the importance of choosing the good and rejecting evil,⁸⁶ things that the Scriptures acknowledge (Deut. 30:19; Josh. 24:15; Rom. 5:20; 12:1-2). The difference is that the Scriptures also acknowledge sin as being present even without volition, the need for saving atonement at all times, a Representative to carry our guilt, and that the only means of making right choices is recognizing a deep need with humility—being connected with God by faith (e.g. Ex. 28:28-40; Lev. 4, 6:13; Deut. 10:12; Rom. 3-5; Rom. 3-8; Eph. 3-4; Gal. 5; Heb. 7:25).

Realism

The main problem with the realistic view is that it overly literalizes the metaphorical participation language of Paul. When Paul writes of our participation with Christ in His death, resurrection and ascension (Rom. 6; Eph. 2:6; Gal. 2:19), he does not mean these expressions literally, but metaphorically. Similarly, when the author of Hebrews (7:9-10) writes of Levi paying tithes to Abraham while still “in his loins,” he qualifies the expression with the phrase “ὡς ἔπος εἰπέν” (“so to speak”). The point of the passage seems to be that Melchizedek was outside of the covenant line, and yet Abraham blessed him. So it could be said that he was also greater than Levi, the descendant of Abraham. In the same way, “all sinned” in 5:12, as argued above, should be taken metaphorically in terms of representative headship. One of the main reasons for this is that it maintains the doctrinal interconnectivity between Paul’s view of sin and justification. Are we justified because we actually lived Christ’s life (or are living it), or because He, as our Representative, lived it in our place so as to impute to us His perfection? The realism view tends to unintentionally minimize the importance of

85. See Madueme and Reeves, “Threads in a Seamless Garment: Original Sin in Systematic Theology,” in Madueme and Reeves, *Adam, the Fall*, 221.

86. Peter Sanlon, “Original Sin in Patristic Theology” in Madueme and Reeves, *Adam*, 96.

the scriptural concepts of imputation and transfer of punishment and guilt so integral to the sacrificial system as well as to the idea of Christ's atonement (e.g. Lev.1-6; Isa. 53; Rom. 3; 1 John 2:2). Sometimes this view is driven by a concern for justice,⁸⁷ i.e.: the only way that all of Adam's posterity could be justly considered guilty is if they actually participated in the sin of Adam. But if there is objection on the ground of justice to the very concept of imputation or corporate solidarity in principle, then there should be objection to it in all cases, not only in that of original sin—such as (e.g.) Lev. 4:3; Josh. 7:1, 11-12; Matt. 23:35; 2 Kings 5:27; etc.; imputed righteousness, or the imputation of our sin to Christ (Isa. 53). (These passages and others relevant to this issue will be further examined below).

Positively, the realistic headship view recognizes the deep connection between Adam and his posterity, the deep-seated nature of sin in all human beings, and the need for a Savior as the only means of escape from our inherited condition.

Universal Legal Justification

According to this view, Romans 5:12-21 does not teach original sin, but rather “original grace: every child is born under the grace of God, born saved.”⁸⁸ As shown above, it is unlikely that the passage can be interpreted in this way, especially in light of Paul's thought in all of his writings. Justification is something that involves receiving the gift of Christ by faith (Rom. 5:17; 3-4; Eph. 2; Gal. 2-3; etc.). In addition, Paul describes our initial state as one of wrath and death, not justification and life (Eph. 2; cf. Ps. 51:5; Gen. 8:21; Rom. 3)—these blessings come only subsequently to reception of Christ. God was reconciling the world to Himself in the death of Christ (2 Cor. 5:19), but the reconciliation is only fully accomplished when a person accepts the gift of justification and as a result becomes “in Christ” (v. 17)—thus Paul exhorts his readers to “be reconciled to God”—a human

⁸⁷ Erickson, 580; Norman Gulley, *Creation, Christ, Salvation*, vol. 3 of *Systematic Theology*, (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 2012), 167.

⁸⁸ Cottrell, 333.

response is necessary for the reconciliation to be fully effected. Adoption into God's family is not a birthright for all, but only for those who are "born again" (John 1:12-13; 3:3). Those who remain in the world are not of this status (1 John 3:1; Rom. 8:6-17).

Despite this view's significant problematic aspects, it does serve as a reminder that Romans 5:12-21 is about the greatness of Christ more than the sin of Adam and its effects. Christ has indeed reversed the curse of the Fall for those who receive Him—indeed, through the cross Christ has and does reach out toward every human being through His prevenient grace (John 12:32; Acts 17:27-31; Titus 2:11; John 3:16-18; 2 Pet. 3:9; etc.).

Mediate Imputation

The weakness of the mediate imputation view⁸⁹ is that it removes the immediate cause of death, guilt, and punishment from Adam, as envisaged by Paul, and places it in the state of the human being alone. The relationship with Adam is still present, more so than with Pelagius, but it appears to be less direct than the exegesis provided above indicates. Perhaps most importantly, it removes the analogy that Paul articulates between what we receive from Adam and what we receive from Christ. If we are condemned solely on the basis of who and what we are in ourselves, it would follow from the close parallelisms of the passage that our justification must also be reckoned on the basis of who we are and what we are in ourselves, rather than upon an imputed and reckoned status—an "alien righteousness" that is given to us as a gift. Charles Hodge presented perhaps the most cogent refutation of mediate imputation when he wrote:

It is a still more serious objection that this doctrine destroys the parallel between Adam and Christ on which the Apostle lays so much stress in his Epistle to the Romans. The great point which he there labours to teach and to illustrate, and which he represents as a cardinal element of the method of salvation, is that men are justified for

89. The most succinct expression of this view is found in Calvin: "Original sin, then, may be defined a hereditary corruption and depravity of our nature, extending to all parts of the soul, which first makes us obnoxious to the wrath of God, then produces in us works which in Scripture are termed "works of the flesh" . . . (Gal. 5:19). . . . This is not liability for another's fault. For, since it is said that the sin of Adam has made us obnoxious to the justice of God, we are to understand it not as if, we, who are in ourselves innocent and blameless, are bearing his guilt, but that since by his transgression we are all placed under the curse, he is said to have brought us under obligation. Through him, however, not only has punishment been derived, but pollution instilled, for which punishment is justly due," Calvin, *Institutes*, 217 (2.1.8). In some sense, this passage seems to affirm some aspects of both the Federal and Mediate views. His emphasis, however, is upon the condemnation due to our sinful nature.

a righteousness which is not personally their own. To illustrate and confirm this great fundamental doctrine, he refers to the fact that men have been condemned for a sin which is not personally their own. He over and over insists that it was for the sin of Adam, and not for our own sin or sinfulness, that the sentence of death (the forfeiture of the divine favour) passed upon all men. It is on this ground he urges men the more confidently to rely upon the promise of justification on the ground a righteousness which is not inherently ours. This parallel destroyed, the doctrine and argument of the Apostle are overturned, if it be denied that the sin of Adam, as antecedent to any sin or sinfulness of our own is the ground of our condemnation. If we are partakers of the penal consequences of Adam's sin only because of the corrupt nature derived by a law of nature from him, then we are justified only on the ground of our own inherent holiness derived by a law of grace from Christ. We have thus the doctrine of subjective justification, which overthrows the great doctrine of the Reformation, and the great ground of the peace and confidence of the people of God, namely, that a righteousness not within us but wrought out for us, — the righteousness of another, even the eternal Son of God, and therefore an infinitely meritorious righteousness, — is the ground of our justification before God. Any doctrine which tends to invalidate or to weaken the Scriptural evidence of this fundamental article of our faith is fraught with evil greater than belongs to it in itself considered.⁹⁰

On the other hand, it should be acknowledged that the mediate imputation view is rightly concerned about the reality of our sinful natures. While this does not appear to be in focus in the pericope of Romans 5:12-21 and thus insufficient to account for all of the Scriptural data in regard to original sin,⁹¹ it is an important reality of hamartiology to recognize that we have a corrupt nature for which we are guilty.

Throughout this whole passage what Adam did and what Christ did are steadily held over against each other. Now salvation in Christ does not mean that we merit salvation by living good lives; rather, what Christ has done is significant. Just so, death in Adam does not mean that we are being punished for our own evil deeds; it is what Adam has done that is significant. This does not mean that our sinful nature or our many actual sins are unimportant to Paul. Nor does it mean that he is indifferent to human responsibility. It simply means that these things are not what he is talking about here.⁹²

We are indeed guilty because of who and what we are, not only Adam's sin. And there is an integral connection between the two. The reason we have a sinful nature is because the sin of Adam separated him and all of his posterity from God. Just as justification and sanctification cannot be separated, though they are distinguished, so it is also the case that our sinful nature—though it is not the cause of original guilt itself—is integrally connected to our being represented by Adam. “[Human beings’] sin is not merely individualistic, though they do sin individually, but their sin

90. Hodge, 212-213.

91. This is in contrast to of Gulley (161), who argues for “imputed tendency to sin,” rather than “imputed punishment.” He also writes that “Adam did not impute to humans condemnation, guilt, punishment, or sin” (160). While I agree with Gulley's main point that “separation from God” comes from Adam, I would suggest on the basis of the exegesis offered here that the text of Romans 5:12-21 refers to this separation as a “condemnation” or punishment, that we are all set as “sinners” and that these results come to us directly from Adam.

92. Morris, 232.

finds its roots in Adam's sin; and they are counted as sinners because of Adam's disobedience. Still, their actually becoming sinners or righteous is the consequence or result of their being counted as sinners in Adam or as righteous in Christ."⁹³

Natural Heredity

*The problem with this view is, again, that it denies the close connection between what Paul suggests Adam's role is and our reception of the results of it. It holds that people die for their own sins, not that of Adam. Again the parallel between imputed guilt and imputed righteousness is broken such that consistently systematic advocates of this view go so far as to explicitly question or deny the reality of the latter.*⁹⁴ *Another weakness of this view is that it limits the results of sin to a situation in which everyone enters the world at varying levels of depravity, depending upon their parentage or ancestry. This is true to a certain extent, in that each individual inherits certain specific tendencies from their ancestors, but it is insufficient to account for Paul's language in this passage. Paul envisions a level field in which all come into the world in a desperate state of condemnation and a death sentence. It is only with this conception that the role of Christ as Representative Rectifier can be most appreciated for what it is expressed by Paul to be.*

Again, positively speaking, the passing along of a sinful nature through natural heredity is a scriptural doctrine (even though it is not Paul's subject in Romans 5). Genesis 5:3 shows the tragedy that Adam's son Seth was born in his image and likeness, rather than that of God, as Adam was originally created. Inherited depravity is part of the results of the Fall—a part of the results of sin,

93. Schreiner, "Original Guilt and Original Death" in *Adam, The Fall*, 286.

94. Miley, 550; Wiley, 400-401; Charles Finney "Justification by Faith," http://www.gospeltruth.net/1837LTPC/lptc05_just_by_faith.htm. While not as explicit or pervasive as in Miley and Wiley, the *Handbook of Seventh-day Adventist Theology*, ed. Raoul Dederen (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 2000), contains two articles which might serve to show this tendency. In John Fowler's article "Sin," it is postulated that sin and guilt only occur with a deliberate action—having a sinful nature is not sin (257). In the same volume, in the article "Salvation," by Ivan Blazen, there seems to be unease with both the legal and imputed aspects of justification—"there can be no 'as if' in regard to our justification—i.e. that we are justified and "made righteous" "in a relational sense" because we are reconciled to God (284), as opposed to the converse Pauline idea that we are reconciled to God because we are justified (Rom. 5; 2 Cor. 5:14-21). In addition, the concept of the imputed righteousness of Christ is not mentioned in the article at all, but only in an appendix quotation from Ellen White (308).

but it does not account for all of the language and meaning of Paul in this passage in particular, as well as the relation of the Fall narrative in Genesis 3.

In its most problematic form (New Haven), this view also holds that having a sinful nature is not sin itself, but (similar to Pelagianism), holds that sin is only actual when it is chosen.

Theoretically, this allows for the possibility of someone duplicating the life of Christ in absolute sinless perfection. Again, the profound need for a new Representative and forensic justification are denied and the parallels in Paul's thought are obscured if not nullified.

Immediate Imputation (Federalism)

It is this view which most essentially fits the meaning of both Romans 5:12-21 as well as the material found in Genesis 3 and other relevant scriptural passages. It is able to include the insights of the other views, but recognizes that they are insufficient to account for all of what is being conveyed in the texts. As such it is the most comprehensive. This view recognizes most closely the parallels given by Paul between what we receive from Adam and what we receive from Christ. The guilt of Adam is imputed to us, ours to Christ, and Christ's righteousness to us. This raises the important question of what exactly the condemnation and punishment is for Adam's sin on the Federal view. The exegesis above seems to indicate that the main punishment envisioned by Paul is death—primarily physical but not excluding spiritual death, because the account in Genesis 3 and following shows that there was also a break in communion with God that involved separation. This separation involves having a sinful, rebellious nature. The judicial punishment for the imputed guilt of the Fall is thus death and separation from God. The natural results of this punishment are a sinful nature and lack of original righteousness.⁹⁵

Again Hodge presents a cogent description:

The imputation of Adam's sin to us, of our sins to Christ, and of Christ's righteousness to believers, the nature of imputation is the same, so that the one case illustrates the others. When it is said that our sins were imputed

95. Ibid., 145. See below for a discussion of the disagreement between Hodge and Murray over guilt and punishment.

to Christ, or that He bore our sins, it is not meant that he actually committed our sins, or that He was morally criminal on account of them, or that the demerit of them rested upon Him. All that is meant is that He assumed, in the language of the older theologians, "our law-place." He undertook to answer the demands of justice for the sins of men, or, as it is expressed by the Apostle, to be made a curse for them. In like manner, when it is said that the righteousness of Christ is imputed to believers, it does not mean that they wrought out that righteousness, that they were the agents of the acts of Christ in obeying the law; nor that the merit of his righteousness is their personal merit; nor that it constitutes their moral character; it simply means that his righteousness, having been wrought out by Christ for the benefit of his people, in their name, by Him as their representative, it is laid to their account, so that God can be just in justifying the ungodly.⁹⁶

What humanity needs is not only forgiveness for their sinful nature, sinful choices, and natural heredity; humanity needs a new Representative to reverse the curse of Adam's Fall, a new status, reconciliation through union with Christ.

Hodge and others⁹⁷ duly and rightly note that there are many examples in Scripture of representation and substitution: There are many cases in which leaders or members of the nation of Israel negatively determined (to a great extent) the destiny of their lineages or of the nation as a whole (Lev. 4:3; 1 Sam. 3:11-14; 1 Sam. 4:10-22; Matt. 23:34-39; Acts 2:23, 3:13-15; Joshua 7; 2 Kings 5:27; Mal. 1:2-3; 1 Sam. 3:14; 2 Kings 22:19-20; 1 Kings 14:10; etc.). In other cases, the intercession of Moses (Ex. 32:9-14; 34:9-28), the actions of Aaron to stay the plague (Num. 16:47-48), and the ubiquitous examples of the principle of substitution in the sacrificial system (e.g. Lev. 1-6) are demonstrative of the principle of positive, beneficial representation, the supreme instance of which, of course, was Christ's substitutionary atonement (Isa. 53; Rom. 3; Gal. 3; 2 Cor. 5:21; 1 Pet. 3:18; etc.). While some of the OT examples could be considered by some to be prophecies of natural hereditary results, this explanation will not fit such cases as Lev. 4:3, Josh. 7:1, 11; Jer. 26:15; 2 Kings 5:27; Matt. 23:35; and 2 Sam. 12:14 (among others). The prayers of Daniel and Ezra (chapters 9 in both cases) presuppose corporate guilt. In all of these cases there is imputed guilt and/or punishment because of the actions of one or several persons upon people who did not participate in the sin of the representative or representatives. If the imputation of Adam's guilt is unjust, then so also should

96. Hodge, 194-195.

97. Hodge, 198-199; Boyd, 253-257.

these cases be unjust. But God is not unjust (Ps. 119:37; Ezra 9:15; Gen. 18:25)—He is righteous in all His ways. None of these people’s eternal destinies were fixed by means of this representation. All of them had some opportunity to accept the provisions of salvation offered by either the sanctuary system or Christ’s antitypical fulfillment of it in the cross and His intercession.

Regarding these examples, two further things should be noted. Firstly, none of these are exact parallels to the situation described in Romans 5. None of these people’s actions affected the entire world (including every human being who has ever lived), as did Adam’s and Christ’s. What these examples do serve to show, however, is that ostensible charges of injustice in regard to the imputation of Adam’s sin should consistently be likewise applied to these other situations. If the principle of imputed guilt or representation is invalid by reason of injustice, it should be invalid in all cases—including that of Christ being our Substitute who was punished for our sins (Isa. 53; 1 Pet. 3:18). Secondly, and related to the first point, there is a qualification given to the representation principle in Ezek. 18 and Deut. 24:16 (and other examples in kind—Lev. 26:40-42; Neh. 9:2-3; Dan. 9:4-27; 2 Cor. 3:16; 2 Kings 21:19-2 Kings 22:2) in that the rebellions of a parent, ancestry, or representative do not determine everything in regard to their progeny. It should be noted that these qualifying passages are sometimes used to argue against original sin, but as noted above, they are actually not cases in kind. Only Adam’s and Christ’s representative roles have effects for all human beings without exception (more precisely Christ’s role has potential effects for everyone and actual effects for those who receive Him—as was discussed above), and they are not matters of natural heredity, as are those being addressed, for example, in Ezekiel 18. The issue being dealt with in that passage is the reality that each person can decide whether they will follow in the ways of their parents. The biblical principles of representation and corporate national and familial solidarity do not eliminate the principle of personal responsibility—particularly in regard to final destiny. Though all come into the world “condemned already” in Adam, damaged by the sins of their

ancestors, and are under the wrath of God, no one needs to remain in this state. Those who accept Christ have their condemnation removed (Eph. 2:3; John 3:16-21; Rom. 8:1). No one can say that they are lost because of Adam, but because they have rejected the second Adam.⁹⁸ In this light, Romans 5 is one the most important in regard to theodicy—it shows that God has not allowed the representation of Adam and his imputed guilt to control the destiny of any human being. Christ has provided Himself as a new Representative Rectifier for those who accept His gracious gift. Finally, it should be noted that any view that connects our death and sinful nature to Adam in any way (excluding the Pelagian) faces the same questions of justice. In all of these cases it is admitted that the earth is cursed and death is our lot because of what Adam did, not because of what we did. We are all born with a sinful nature and are condemned to suffering and death because of him. It is difficult to see how this could be considered any less unjust—according to a consistent line of reasoning—if the Federal view is viewed as unjust by reason of the fact that this state has resulted from Adam’s imputed guilt and punishment rather than natural consequence alone. (And as has been argued above, it seems evident that passages such as Gen. 3 and Romans 5 suggest that there is ample basis to conclude that there was guilt and punishment, not only natural consequences). All agree that the results of the Fall are upon us before we have any capacity to think or act. God could have arranged it so that this was not the case, without violating any laws of His own nature. God Himself ordained the system of what would be a “natural consequence.” Thus even if Adam’s sin is viewed this way, the questions of justice are not evaded. In all cases, theodical arguments must be adduced to account for the situation (See below for further aspects of original sin that impinge upon theodical questions).

98. See further below on the section on theodicy. It is evident from what has just been stated that I hold to the view that God’s grace is extended to all persons by means of the atonement. E.g. I take passages such as John 3:16; Titus 2:11; 1 John 2:2; 1 Tim. 2:4; 2 Pet. 3:9; Heb. 2:9 to refer to Christ’s atonement for all persons.

It should also be noted that the immediate imputation “Federal view,” while often associated with Calvinism, has also been embraced entirely by many Arminians, including John Wesley. He also saw the important doctrinal interconnectivity involved in original sin:

Thus “by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin. And so death passed upon all men,” as being contained in him who was the common father and representative of us all. Thus, “through the offence of one,” all are dead, dead to God, dead in sin, dwelling in a corruptible, mortal body, shortly to be dissolved, and under the sentence of death eternal. For as, “by one man’s disobedience,” all “were made sinners;” so, by that offence of one, “judgment came upon all men to condemnation” (Romans v. 12, &c.). In this state we were, even all mankind, when “God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, to the end we might not perish, but have everlasting life.” In the fullness of time he was made Man, another common Head of mankind, a second general Parent and Representative of the whole human race. And as such it was that “he bore our griefs,” “the Lord laying upon him the iniquities of us all.”

In consideration of this, that the Son of God hath “tasted death for every man,” God hath now “reconciled the world to himself, not imputing to them their” former “trespasses.” And thus, “as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation, even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification.” So that, for the sake of his well-beloved Son, of what he hath done and suffered for us, God now vouchsafes, on one only condition, (which himself also enables us to perform,) both to remit the punishment due to our sins, to reinstate us in his favour, and to restore our dead souls to spiritual life, as the earnest of life eternal.

This, therefore, is the general ground of the whole doctrine of justification. By the sin of the first Adam, who was not only the father, but likewise the representative, of us all, we all fell short of the favour of God; we all became children of wrath; or, as the Apostle expresses it, “judgment came upon all men to condemnation.” Even so, by the sacrifice for sin made by the Second Adam, as the Representative of us all, God is so far reconciled to all the world, that he hath given them a new covenant; the plain condition whereof being once fulfilled, “there is no more condemnation” for us, but “we are justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Jesus Christ.”⁹⁹

In regard to Romans 5, Wesley wrote that “all sinned in Adam,” and in discussing Christ and Adam he says, “Each of them being a public person, and a federal head of mankind. The one, the fountain of sin and death to mankind by his offence; the other, of righteousness and life by his free gift. . . . As the sin of Adam, without the sins which we afterwards committed, brought us death; so the righteousness of Christ, without the good works which we afterwards perform, brings us life: although still every good, as well as evil, work, will receive its due reward.”¹⁰⁰

99. John Wesley, “Justified by Faith,” in *The Essential Works of John Wesley*, Alice Russie, ed., (Uhrichsville, OH: Barbour Publishing, 2011), 285.

100. John Wesley, “Explanatory Notes,” <http://www.biblestudytools.com/commentaries/wesleys-explanatory-notes/romans/romans-5.html>. Thomas McCall, in “But a Heathen Still” from *Adam, the Fall*, (150) discusses the disagreement among Wesleyan scholars concerning Wesley’s beliefs regarding original guilt. What seems evident is that some of those who reject original guilt in their theology seek to make Wesley agree with their own view. McCall demonstrates the problems with their line of argumentation and shows that Wesley never denied original guilt. He simply maintained that Christ had provided atonement available to all for it, including infants.

But, as Wesleyan scholar Thomas McCall notes, this emphasis eventually waned in the later Wesleyan tradition, which moved more toward an emphasis upon the human will.¹⁰¹

There are some ideas that this Federal view has had associated with it that require further discussion. For example, this theory has often been associated with the idea of what is called soul “creationism.” This is the concept that God creates each individual “soul” and deliberately “depraves” it as punishment for Adam’s sin. A sinful nature being individually created in each person as the condemnation for Adam’s sin involves difficulties— e.g., God would not create evil in human nature if it did not already naturally exist there.¹⁰² As previously noted, the Federal view (especially as articulated by Hodge), envisions the idea of imputed guilt as liability to punishment. As such, the sinful nature can be viewed as a result of the punishment of separation from God stemming from Adam’s sin, rather than it being in itself being the punishment.

Theological Analysis: Doctrinal Interconnectivity

A definitional facet of systematic theology is the concept of doctrinal interconnectedness—that is to say that each of the various doctrinal segments that comprise the larger compendium of the system are described as existing in symbiosis, rather than functioning independently. According to one of the earliest definitions of the discipline,

Systematic theology is the essence of the very same truths of religion which are contained in the Bible, but with their premises and implications made explicit and placed in the context appropriate to their mutual relations, or—in other words—set out in an arrangement in which one either supports and explains another or limits and more precisely defines another.¹⁰³

101. Thomas McCall, “But a Heathen Still” in *Adam, the Fall*, 147-148.

102. Donald Macleod, “Original Sin in Reformed Theology” in *Adam, the Fall*, 143. Macleod rightly rejects this view for the reasons stated above as well as for the reason he states that “a human being is a psychosomatic unity, a fact that is brought out in the story of creation. When God breathed into Adam’s nostrils, he became a living soul (*nephesh hayyim*, Gen. 2:7). This implies that rather than ‘having’ a soul, a person is a ‘soul’” (145).

103. G.J. Planck, *Einleitung in die theologischen Wissenschaften*, (Leipzig, 1794), 1:113, quoted in Wolfgang Pannenberg, *Theology and the Philosophy of Science*, (Philadelphia, PA: Westminster Press, 1976), 405-406.

Systematic theology involves attention to how “the structure grows logically out of the foundation and how the doctrines relate to one another to produce harmony in the system.”¹⁰⁴

The exegesis of Romans 5:12-21 and examination of original sin above lend themselves to further reflection in terms of the doctrinal interconnectivity it elaborates. In this section, the ramifications of the passage and conceptualization of original sin will be noted in regard to the soteriological cluster, incorporating the insights of this pericope into the larger framework of the other germane canonical materials. In addition, the ramifications of the Federal View will be examined in terms of their potential benefits in regard to theodical questions.

Anthropological Implications:

We are part of a corporate body—either in Adam or in Christ. Our identities are individual, but not merely individual. Adam functioned as the Representative of all of humanity. Psalm 8 refers to the dominion of humanity over nature in creation in terms that are used for Adam and Eve in Genesis 1. In Hebrews 2, Jesus is referred to in terms of Psalm 8, thus showing the inspired connectivity among all three. Christ is the new Adam, the one who provides a new hope for humanity.

We are guilty, depraved, helpless sinners from birth. We come into a rebellious planet with a rebellious federal head. We are born lost and under condemnation. But God has provided a new Head of the race in Christ. He succeeded where Adam failed, He obeyed where Adam disobeyed; and thus for those who receive the gift of justification, Christ becomes the Rectifier who functions as their Representative.

God has not left us without a solution for our original plight: We are constantly drawn by God’s prevenient grace (Titus 2:11; John 1:9; 3:16; 12:30-32) toward Him. God gives the capacity to accept His drawing and come to an adopted, accepted, justified, sanctified, and glorified relationship

104. F. Leroy Forlines, *The Quest for Truth: Answering Life’s Inescapable Questions*, (Nashville, TN: Randall House Publications, 2001), 4.

with Him through Christ. Even after this, however, we are in constant need of continual atonement by Christ in the heavenly sanctuary because of our sinful state (1 John 2:2; Heb. 7:25). Through the provisions of the sacrificial system and the opportunities for justifying faith (Rom. 4), the grace of Christ has been operational ever since the Fall. Though the promises of Christ's future redemptive work, OT believers were justified by faith and as such received the benefits of Christ's incipient rectification prior to its final actualization.

Hamartiological implications:

Sin reigns and causes guilt regardless of any individual, specific acts. It is a state, a reckoning, a dominion. It is a complex conception that includes descriptions as a personified power that rules, grows, and enters the world invasively.¹⁰⁵ "Paul expects us to understand that our natural condition inherited from Adam makes us vulnerable to everlasting death and that eternal death will be the outcome without life by the One, the Lord Jesus Christ. Our natural status is that all we need to do to end in eternal death is nothing."¹⁰⁶ "Sin is not . . . a superficial matter of imitation, of 'opting in' to a particular way of life from a basic position of neutrality. It is a profound thing, affecting us all the way down and thus forcing us to look outside ourselves for hope. . . . Originated sin is a daily reminder of our need for divine grace."¹⁰⁷ If the origin of our sin problem resides in us alone—even if it is due to our inherited sinful nature—then the ultimate solution to the sin problem must also reside in us alone—through our sanctification, right choices, etc. But if our sin problem began outside of ourselves through a failing representative, then the solution to the sin problem must originate from outside of ourselves with a new, successful Representative.

Adam's sin was imputed to us, but also caused us to be actually sinful as well, just as the righteousness of Christ imputed to us causes us to gradually become righteous as well. But Paul is

105. Dunn, 96.

106. Steven W. Waterhouse, *Not by Bread Alone: An Outlined Guide to Biblical Doctrine*, (Amarillo, TX: Westcliff Press, 2003), 65.

107. Dueme and Reeves, "Threads in a Seamless Garment," in *Adam, the Fall*, 219.

concerned in Romans with differentiating between these realities, though without separating them. For him, it is paramount to understand our legal status before a holy God, recognizing our need of a new Representative and Substitute—not inner transformation alone. Indeed, the latter cannot take place without the former. Being in Christ means foremost being granted His righteous status. The outflowing of this is also participation in His righteous character qualities. In the same way, we are legally counted as sinners by our representative head Adam, and as an outflowing result we also participate in our sinful nature bequeathed to us by him and his posterity.

Christological Implications:

Christ as the Second Adam is presented as our Representative, Substitute, and Savior. No matter how much He was and is our Example, He is first and foremost our Savior. He regained that which Adam lost. As a result, He could not have come into the world as a Man with a guilty, depraved, and sinful nature (Heb. 7:26-28). In order for Him to be a perfect offering for the sins of the whole world, in order to be able to impute a perfect righteousness to all who believe in Him, Christ had to begin where the first Adam began—with a sinless, pure nature. He succeeded where the first Adam failed, which thus enabled Him to take our place as the new Head and Representative of humanity. Through union with Christ, we can be accounted righteous, gradually changed back into the image of God, and eventually have our sinful natures and sinful bodies of death exchanged for a body like His glorious body (Phil. 3:21).

Just as our imputed forensic guilt is connected with having a sinful nature, so also is our being accounted righteous concomitant with becoming more righteous in nature. But the ground of our imputed guilt and punishment is what Adam did, just as the ground of justification—imputed righteousness—is what Christ did. Guilt imputed to Christ resulted in separation from God and physical death. Guilt imputed to the race of humanity resulted in separation from God and physical/spiritual death. Just as we received the imputed guilt and punishment of death and

separation from God because of Adam, without having actually participated in his sin, so also Christ received imputed guilt and punishment of all sinners by suffering death and separation from God, without having actually participated in their sin. Thus, imputed guilt is not the same as actual guilt. Christ was not actually guilty of sin, but He was treated *as though* He was guilty—guilt was imputed to Him. Likewise, the sin of Adam has been imputed to us—his guilt is reckoned to us *as though* we ourselves did what he did. Likewise, we are not actually righteous in ourselves, but rather Christ’s righteousness is imputed to us and we are treated *as though* we were as righteous as He is. Hodge refers to the results of Adam’s sin as “punishment, i.e., an evil inflicted in execution of the penalty of law and for the satisfaction of justice.”¹⁰⁸ He argues on the basis of the fact that Christ was not a sinner but was punished as one. Murray, on the other hand, suggests that we should not draw too close of a parallel between what we receive from Adam and what Christ received from all of us. We were not only imputed with Adam’s guilt and punishment, but also actually have sinfulness and a sinful nature because of our union with him, whereas Christ never became a sinner or had a sinful nature.¹⁰⁹ I would suggest that Hodge is essentially correct, but that Murray’s insight serves as a reminder of the integral connections between the imputation and the actuality, not only the punishment or righteousness involved. Could it be said of Christ that he “sinned” or that He was “constituted as a sinner” as Paul said about us? No, but Scripture does refer to Christ as becoming sin itself (2 Cor. 5:21) and having iniquities placed upon Him (Isa. 53). In addition, as Paul notes, there are differences between the results of Adam’s sin and the results of the atonement: We receive the imputation of *one* sin, whereas Christ received the imputation of *all* the sins of the whole world. We became sinners in ourselves, not just guilty of sin, by reason of our separation from God and the naturally conveyed sinful nature. But Christ could not become a sinner by becoming guilty and punished for our sin for two important reasons: First, unlike Adam, He did not fail in His battles

108. Hodge, 194. ii.ix.

109. Murray, *The Imputation*, 77-95.

against temptation. He won the victory, and the right to be our new Representative. As such, He could not become sinful because of His temporary separation from God on account of the atonement. Secondly, Christ is God, and as such He could not permanently lose this connection with His Father because He had been faithful in His sinless mission. The grave could not hold Him.

*Doctrinal systems and their interconnections are often organized around one center or focal nodal point by which means coherence is pursued. One of the goals of the present study is to demonstrate that both coherence and center will emerge from an examination of the ramifications of the garnered canonical doctrines themselves, rather than imposing an *a priori* organizing principle which is then the controlling—rather than consequential—means of connectivity. For example, this writer concurs with those systems that postulate Christ as the center of all doctrines on the basis of ample Scriptural support (John 1:1-18, 5:39-40, 14:6; Luke 24:25-27; 44-47; Acts 4:12; Col. 1:14-19; Heb. 1:1-3, etc.).¹¹⁰ But the foregoing suggested methodology is more aptly suited to approach the necessary questions: Which Christ? What are His Person and Work? Why are they central (in addition to the fact that there is Scriptural data that so indicates—on what basis is the Scriptural testimony building)? The study of the interconnectivity between original sin and the soteriological cluster more precisely elucidates the nature of Christ and His work, as well as demonstrating what His work accomplishes in light of the problem which He has been engaged to solve.*

The centrality of Christ for all of Scripture emerges from the conclusions of this study. In each of the doctrines examined, He is the unifying center and golden thread. Every human problem finds its solution in Christ. Adamic original sin is the ultimate human problem and Christ is the ultimate and only solution. Thus in a sense, Tillich is right when he says that systematic theology “makes an analysis of the human situation out of which the existential questions arise, and it

110. See e.g. Kevin Vanhoozer, *The Drama of Doctrine: A Canonical Linguistic Approach to Christian Theology*. (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2005), 38-39; Graeme Goldsworthy, *Gospel-Centered Hermeneutics*, (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2006), 62-63; Alan G. Padgett, “The Canonical Sense of Scripture: Trinitarian or Christocentric?” *Dialog: A Journal of Theology* 45, (2006): 36-43; Kevin G. Smith, “The Christocentric Principle: Promise, Pitfalls, and Proposal,” *Conspectus* (South African Theological Seminary) 13, (2012): 157-170; Billy Marsh, “A Christocentric Theological Method,” Research paper, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2007.

demonstrates that the symbols used in the Christian message are the answers to these questions.”¹¹¹

Christ is portrayed as restoring the whole cosmos that was subjected to futility: “And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together. And he is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent. For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross” (Col. 1:17-20).

Justification Implications:

As has been discussed, justification is forensic and imputed, not inherent or subjective. The guilty sinner (Adam and Eve—Gen. 3), Joshua (Zech. 3), the publican (Luke 18), all human beings—(Rom. 3-5) can bring nothing of merit to God as a basis for forgiveness and imputed righteousness. As noted above, there is a close parallel between what we receive from Adam and what we receive from Christ—both Adam’s sin and Christ’s righteousness are forensically imputed. Thus our only solution is through Christ the justifying Rectifier. All anyone can bring is their “ungodly” (Rom. 4:5) self to Christ, knowing the vast debt and the impossibility of repaying it (Matt. 18). Anyone can come humbly to God through Christ and accept the atonement by faith. The righteousness by which anyone is saved is Christ’s righteousness, not their own. But any person who is justified will grow in grace as they remain united with Christ by faith. They will walk as He walked and obey God’s commandments out of love Him and for His propitiation (1 John 4), rather than as a means of merit. They will rely wholly upon Christ as our saving, mediating, justifying Savior.

Issues of Theodicy:

Issues of doctrinal interconnectivity with regard to original sin extend into almost every area of a system. One of the most important questions revolves around the issue of theodicy. Why did God affix imputed guilt and punishment to all humanity as a result Adam and Eve’s sin? Was

¹¹¹. But I would qualify Tillich’s statement by saying that it is only through divine revelation that the deepest problems of humanity can be truly analyzed and the proper solutions in Christ offered.

this unjust? At least four reasons can be posited for original sin in light of the wider issue of the revelation of God's justice in light of satanic and human rebellion:

I. The guilt and punishment of physical death and separation from God resulted in a curtailment of the spread of corruption. The long-lived antediluvians demonstrated the results of the combination of longevity, sinful environment, and sinful nature. Were it not for the imputed guilt of Adam's sin resulting in the punishment of physical death upon all human beings as a result of this sin, the whole race would consist of immortal sinners given over to an ever-increasing depravity—to an even higher degree than what has actually been the case. The accounting of guilt and the punishment of the curse and death to the whole creation served to reduce the inevitable results of sin in a depraved race. Paul goes some way towards a theodical explanation in Romans 8:20-25:

For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of him who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to corruption and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now. And not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies. For in this hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what he sees? But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience.

In consonance with what was expounded above, this passage seems to indicate evidently the idea of a Fall that resulted in imputed guilt and punishment to the whole creation. It is said here that God is the one who subjected the whole creation to futility (as a punishment for Adam's sin). The animals and the natural world share in the suffering and curse brought in by original sin. The world was initially "very good," but it has now become "vanity"—ματαιότης—the word used to translate the Hebrew הֶבֶל—one of the key words in Ecclesiastes. But in the process of subjecting the creation to futility, He has given all the hope of redemption, first revealed in Gen. 3:15. God did not leave the condemned creation to its punishment alone, but also has provided a way of salvation through Christ. Thus Romans 5:12-21 is actually an important theodical passage—it reveals Christ as the Representative Rectifier for Adam's failure such that it removes any possible accusations of injustice due to his representation, imputed guilt, and its concomitant punishment and natural consequences.

2. *The allowance of depravity in all human beings from birth has resulted in a demonstration for all time and to all created beings (including angels) of the inherent, natural results of sin.*
3. *The guilt, punishment, and natural depravity of the race of humanity results in a situation where only Christ can be the Savior through His imputed righteousness. The sinful, depraved creature as part of a doomed race must recognize his or her plight. The glorification of Christ as the Representative Rectifier is the result of God's redemption plan. God in His foreknowledge recognized that Christ's work would be the only solution to the reign of sin, so He arranged for a situation in which the foreseen contingency of the Fall involved a solution in Christ.*
4. *Our plight as mortal, sinful, frustrated creatures cannot be seen as an unfair punishment for the Fall of Adam. The imputed guilt, death, sin, and suffering stemming from our first Representative can be reversed by the Person and Work of Christ for any person who "receives the gift."*

The determinist view that God ordained the Fall and only gives His grace to some to escape the predicament that He Himself ordained leaves some significant gaps in terms of theodicy. Theodicy on the view of determinism inevitably leads to a regress of explanations that must end with the idea that what God does is right is because God does it, without regard to why. In contrast, Scripture portrays God as wanting to be seen as just by His creatures (Isa. 5:3-4; Rom. 3:3-9; Ps. 51:4; Deut. 32:4).

But there is a further question: What about infants who die and those who have never heard the Gospel? First and foremost, it must be established that any and all that are saved are thus because of Christ's work. He "tasted death for every man" (Heb. 2:9) and bore the sin of the whole world (John 1:36; 1 John 2:2)—including initial Adamic guilt and depravity—and it is reasonable to conclude that this propitiation is effective for infants who die and those who have not heard or who have not had the capacity to make a rational response to God.

Dogmatism is not possible in regard to the question of every single case of those who have not heard, however. John 1:9 indicates that Jesus lights everyone who comes into the world. Perhaps God has a way of reaching those who have not heard the Gospel that causes them to recognize their need for a Savior—that their works are useless for salvation, and that if they believe God’s declaration of their sin and His promises they can be accounted righteous as was Abraham. Indeed, all of the OT saints must be said to be justified and saved by faith (Rom. 3; 4; Heb. 11), not by works. But they did not know all of the details of the final revelation of the Gospel in Christ. What they could know is that they were sinners in need of a Savior, that they needed a sacrifice and substitute as a result, and that they could follow the ways of the Lord as He helped them to become sanctified. Perhaps for those who have never heard the Gospel (or never heard of the Yahweh in the time of the OT), the recognition of the need for atonement and the paucity of the works righteousness prescribed by their own religion (or lack of one) are accepted by God as the basis for imputing the righteousness of Christ to them. Ultimately, the mandate for the church is to spread the Good News as a matter of life and death. The Judge of all the earth will do right.

God will also do what is right in regard infants. Since Christ died for the sin and original guilt of infants, and since they never had the opportunity to accept or reject Christ, a loving God would almost certainly save such little ones and allow them to grow up in the new heavens and new earth. This is why the issue so often historically associated with original sin, that of infant baptism, is only of relevance if one holds to a strongly sacramental view of baptism such that saving grace can only be appropriated through means of this ritual. If one does not hold such a view, (as I do not),¹¹² the issue becomes a moot point. Since no one is directly saved by the ritual alone (important,

¹¹² While baptism is associated with the repentance and faith that leads to salvation in the NT (John 3:5; Acts 2:38; 1 Pet. 3:21; 1 Cor. 12:13; Col. 2:11-13; Acts 8:12; etc.) it is not given as the means *alone* by which a person is saved. It is never associated with a person who is not exercising faith. It is by grace through faith that we are saved (Rom. 3-5; 10:8-10; Eph. 1-2; John 3:16-18; Gal. 3; Phil. 3:8-15; etc.). Baptism, like the Lord’s Supper, is a sign and strengthening of the grace we have received. Thus it is not the ritual in and of itself alone by which this grace is given, but only as it is mixed with true faith.

even necessary, as it is—all things being equal), infants who die before being able to make a decision for Christ, would be saved by means of His atonement, and that alone.

Summary and Conclusion

This study has attempted to demonstrate various facets in which a theological and canonical exegesis of Romans 5:12-21 can provide insights of doctrinal interconnectivity in the soteriological cluster of anthropology, hamartiology, Christology, and justification. The Federal view of original sin has been seen as the most helpful in conceptualizing the foundational nature of this doctrine for soteriological interconnectivity. The implications of this concept for theodicy (another example of interconnectivity) were also explored as further aspects of its importance.

Suggestions for Further Study

While this paper has explored the doctrine of original sin in both Scripture and history to some extent, further study in both areas will provide additional insights. For example, continuing exploration of the Fall narrative as well as other Old Testament and intertestamental data could serve to further strengthen (or weaken) the conclusions offered here. Further historical study could also illuminate some of the underlying causes for the acceptance, rejection, and conceptions of original sin through various times and places.

Theologians in the Seventh-day Adventist context from which I write have generally not embraced any aspects of the stronger traditional views of original sin that involve guilt, punishment, or imputation from Adam's sin, including the federal view outlined here. They have usually adopted something most like the natural heredity view of the New Haven school.¹¹³ On the other hand, Ellen White, SDA main founder and prophetess, appeared to accept some of these aspects of the federal view when she wrote, "Adam sinned, and the children of Adam share his guilt and its

113. See Gulley, 161, 167; John M. Fowler, "Sin" in *Handbook of Seventh-day Adventist Theology*, Raoul Dederen ed., (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 2000), 257; "Sin" in *Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopedia*, (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald, 1976), 1351; Gerhard Pfandl, "Some Thoughts on Original Sin" <https://adventistbiblicalresearch.org/sites/default/files/pdf/sinoriginal-web.pdf>.

consequences.”¹¹⁴ “Children received from Adam an inheritance of disobedience, of guilt and death.”¹¹⁵ “As related to the first Adam, men receive from him nothing but guilt and the sentence of death.”¹¹⁶ “I am lost in Adam, but restored in Christ.”¹¹⁷ “The sin of our first parents brought guilt and sorrow upon the world.”¹¹⁸ If this study’s conclusions are sound, it could add to the ongoing systematic exposition of these issues in the SDA denominational context.

Conclusion

This study has shown that the problem of humanity is perennial and deep-rooted. We are part of a lost, rebellious planet that was sent into a state of death, sin, guilt, punishment and doom by our first federal head Adam. But Christ is and has been the mediating Rectifier since the time of the Fall, the One who reverses the curse, who becomes our new Representative when we receive Him and His gift of imputed justifying righteousness. As such, God has been both just and merciful in His dealings with this planet. Where sin has abounded, grace has abounded much more.

Believing in a historical, originated sin we can confidently affirm that God is not the author of evil, that the suffering and evil in the world is not covertly good, and that God is a God who is faithful to His creation and who redeems it (instead of redeeming us from it). Believing in consequential, originated sin, we can know that Christ is truly for us, having taken our united humanity to himself; that he is truly a Savior and not just an example. We can know a salvation that is entirely gracious, the gift of a most generous God to men and women otherwise enslaved to their sin.”¹¹⁹

114. Ellen G. White, *Signs of the Times* May 19, 1890.

115. White, Lt8-1895 (February 9, 1896).

116. White, *Child Guidance*, (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1954), 475.

117. White, *The Youth’s Instructor*, November 8, 1894.

118. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1958), 61.

119. Madueme and Reeves, “Threads in a Seamless Garment” in *Adam, the Fall*, 224.

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